

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
The Capitol, Room H232  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6501

The Honorable Tom Daschle  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S221 Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Hastert and Majority Leader Daschle:

On behalf of the 184 members of the House Rural Health Care Coalition, we write you to complete action on legislation critical to improving the delivery of health care in rural America. The House has passed a bill that includes adjustments to rural Medicare payments. The Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee have also reached an agreement on a Medicare bill that includes several rural provisions identical to the House bill. We urge the House and Senate leadership to work together to reach a bipartisan compromise and enact a Medicare adjustment bill into law before Congress adjourns this year.

Rural health-care providers are struggling to keep up with the rising costs of providing health care to the more than 61 million Americans who reside in rural communities. The disparities that exist between Medicare payments to rural and urban providers adversely affects seniors' access to quality health care in rural communities. Rural health care providers receive less Medicare reimbursement for delivering the same health care services as urban providers.

Rural Medicare beneficiaries' access to affordable health care is also threatened as the cost of health care, including prescription drugs, continues to rise. People living in rural areas receive less preventative care and medical treatment than other Americans.

Health care in rural America is in jeopardy and Congress needs to act now. We ask for your continued support to improve the Medicare program for rural seniors and to pass legislation prior to adjournment. We urge you to ensure that the health and well-being of rural America is not forgotten.

Sincerely,



Lamar Smith  
Member of Congress